

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 299946

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

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FOR AMBASSADOR AND ASST SECY REINHARDT

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NODIS

FOR AMB SCHAUFLELE FROM WISNER

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR RH UK

SUBJ: STATUS OF RHODESIA CONFERENCE: RECOMMENDED BRIEF-
ING MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY'S MEETINGS IN
LONDON

I. RHODESIAN STATE OF MIND

A. SMITH'S ATTITUDE HAS IMPROVED SOMEWHAT SINCE HIS
ARRIVAL YESTERDAY AND IT NOW LOOKS AS IF HE WILL
NOT PULL OUT OF THE CONFERENCE BEFORE THE SECRETARY'S
MEETINGS IN LONDON THIS WEEKEND. THE SECRETARY'S
INSTRUCTIONS FOR MY INITIAL MEETING WITH SMITH AND
SUBSEQUENT MESSAGE SEEM TO HAVE HAD THE DESIRED
EFFECT, AND FOR THE MOMENT, NO FURTHER ACTION IS
NECESSARY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 299946

B. SMITH'S SENSE OF HAVING BEEN BETRAYED BOTH BY US AND ESPECIALLY THE BRITISH IS REAL. HE IS CONVINCED THAT THE BARGAIN HAS NOT BEEN ADHERED TO. HE CLAIMS HE EXPECTED THE NATIONALISTS WOULD BE HELD TO A DISCUSSION OF THE FIVE POINTS, AND HE IS NOT PREPARED AT PRESENT TO SEE THE NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE ON ANY OTHER BASIS. GIVEN HSI PERCEPTION OF THE BRITISH PERFORMANCE TO DATE, HE WILL NOT BE EASILY MOVED TOWARD ACCEPTANCE OF AN EXPANDED BRITISH ROLE IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR POWER BEING RETAINED IN WHITE RHODESIAN HANDS.

C. NEVERTHELESS, HE HAS AT LEAST INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS AND HAS SIGNALLED THAT HE WILL NOT FOR THE TIME BEING STRIKE OUT ON HIS OWN OR SEEK A SETTLEMENT OUTSIDE THE GENEVA FRAMEWORK. HE IS PROBING FOR AFRICAN SUPPORT OF A NON-GENEVA SETTLEMENT BUT CANNOT REALISTICALLY HOLD OUT REAL HOPE IN THIS RESPECT. HE WILL BE LOOKING TO THE RESULTS OF THE SECRETARY'S MEETINGS IN LONDON AND, FOLLOWING THIS, A CLEAR SIGNAL FROM US ON WHAT THE NEXT STEPS SHOULD BE.

II. REACTIONS TO LETTERS TO THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS.

A. THE WORD IS NOW OUT IN GENEVA ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S LETTERS TO THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS. THEIR EFFECT, AS COMMUNICATED BY THE OBSERVERS HERE, HAS BEEN BOTH SHOCKING AND SOBERING. THE BRITISH HERE SHARE OUT VIEW THAT SUCH AN APPROACH WAS NEEDED TO HALT THE SLIDE INTO UNREALITY, WHICH HAD BEEN REFLECTED HERE IN GROWING INSISTENCE ON THE PART OF BOTH THE NATIONALISTS AND THE OBSERVERS ON INSTANT MAJORITY RULE. AS A RESULT, BOTH THE NATIONALISTS AND THE OBSERVERS ARE MORE AWARE THAT WE CANNOT, AND WILL NOT ATTEMPT, TO PRESS THEIR EXTREME DEMANDS UPON SMITH OR THE SOUTH AFRICANS, AND THERE MAY BE BETTER RECOGNITION THAT A SETTLEMENT MUST BE BASED ON COMPROMISE.

B. THE SECRETARY WILL BE MEETING BOTH MARK CHONA AND SONNY RAMPHAL IN LONDON. HIS MEETING WITH CHONA
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 299946

WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BOTH SOOTHE RUFFLED FEATHERS AND RESTATE OUR VIEWS OF WHAT IS REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT. THE SECRETARY SHOULD:

-- REITERATE HIS HIGH REGARD FOR PRESIDENT KAUNDA AND THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO HIS SENSIBLE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE.

-- EMPHASIZE THAT WE WISH THERE TO BE NO MISUNDERSTANDINGS BETWEEN US AND THAT NONE IS NECESSARY GIVEN THE COMMON GOAL WE SEEK.

-- STRESS OUR DESIRE TO CONCENTRATE ON THE PRESENT AND FUTURE AND NOT THE PAST.

-- REEMPHASIZE OUR FIRM COMMITMENT TO INDEPENDENCE UNDER MAJORITY RULE IN ZIMBABWE;

-- SEEK CHONA'S VIEWS ON WHAT HE AND KAUNDA BELIEVE IS NECESSARY TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK;

-- REITERATE OUR CONVICTION THAT EUROPEANS MUST HAVE A CLEARLY DEFINED ROLE IN THE TRANSITION AND THAT THE CONCEPT OF POWER SHARING MUST BE RESPECTED;

-- DISCUSS WITH CHONA HOW THE BRITISH MIGHT PLAY A ROLE IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND WHAT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO GET THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS TO AGREE TO SUPPORT THIS CONCEPT.

C. WHILE WE DO NOT KNOW ALL THAT RAMPHAL INTENDS TO DISCUSS ON BEHALF OF OBASANJO, WE KNOW FROM NIGERIAN OBSERVER ANYAOKU THAT HE WILL BE OUTLINING A PROPOSAL (WHICH WE ASSUME WAS AUTHORED BY ANYAOKU HIMSELF) FOR A REPACKAGING OF GENEVA BASED ON EXPANDED UK INVOLVEMENT. IF THIS IS THE CASE, WE BELIEVE THAT THE NIGERIANS SHOULD ALSO BE REMINDED OF REALITIES AND ENCOURAGED TO PUT THEIR WEIGHT BEHIND COMPROMISE.

III. THE BRITISH ROLE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 299946

A. ALL OF THE GENEVA OBSERVERS ARE NOW CONVINCED THAT ACTIVE BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT TO ANY SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATED OUTCOME. WHILE NONE OF THEM HAS YET BEEN ABLE TO SPECIFY WHAT THAT ROLE SHOULD BE, ALL BELIEVE THAT NEW SETTLEMENT PACKAGE BASED ON AN EXPANDED BRITISH ROLE CAN BE SOLD TO THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS, WHO CAN IN TURN GAIN NATIONALIST ACCEPTANCE. THE BRITISH DELEGATION HERE INDICATED THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT IS NOW PREPARED TO CONSIDER RESPONSIBILITIES FAR GREATER THAN ANY IT WAS PREPARED TO ASSUME AT THE OUTSET. THE GENEVA DELEGATION, INCLUDING RICHARD, INDICATES IT EXPECTS DECISIONS TO BE MADE THIS WEEKEND IN LONDON FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS AND RHODESIANS AND THE SOUTH AFRICANS.

B. AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, HOWEVER, SMITH REMAINS DEEPLY DISTRUSTFUL OF THE BRITISH, WHOM HE REGARDS AS BEING BOTH WEAK AND INDECISIVE AND IN LEAGUE WITH THE AFRICANS, AND IS THEREFORE EXTREMELY SKEPTICAL ABOUT BRITISH INVOLVEMENT IN THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. THEREFORE, WE WILL HAVE TO GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT TO HOW AND HOW MUCH BRITISH INVOLVEMENT WE MIGHT BE PREPARED TO PRESS UPON SMITH IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT IN THE COMING DAYS.

IV. THE RECESS ISSUE.

A. A CONFERENCE RECESS IS INEVITABLE SINCE THERE IS NO WAY THAT A SETTLEMENT CAN BE ACHIEVED BY DECEMBER 20. THE RHODESIANS WOULD LIKE TO SEE AN ADJOURNMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. RICHARD'S PREFERENCE IS THAT THE CONFERENCE ADJOURN AS EARLY AS DECEMBER 14, FOLLOWING YOUR MEETINGS IN LONDON. ALL, INCLUDING THE OBSERVERS AND THE NATIONALISTS, AGREE THAT THE WAY IN WHICH THE CONFERENCE ADJOURNS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHEN. IT WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO END THE CONFERENCE ON THE MOST POSITIVE NOTE POSSIBLE IF THERE IS TO BE ANY CHANCE OF GETTING THE PARTIES BACK TOGETHER AFTER THE HOLIDAYS. THIS MAY PROVE TO BE THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT IMPASSE. THE BRITISH IN PARTICULAR MUST BE READY TO
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 299946

MAKE A MAJOR EFFORT IN THIS REGARD, THE SECRETARY MAY WISH TO PRESS THEM TO DEVELOP THEIR IDEAS ON HOW THE RECESS SHOULD BE ENGINEERED.

B. THE SECRETARY MIGHT ALSO PRESS THE BRITISH TO FIX A DATE FOR RECONVENING THE CONFERENCE. THE SHORTER THE RECESS THE BETTER, OTHERWISE ENERGIES WILL DISSIPATE AND MOMENTUM WILL BE LOST. WE BELIEVE THAT THE RECESS SHOULD NOT EXCEED THREE TO FOUR WEEKS. WE WILL ALSO NEED TO PLAN CAREFULLY HOW THE INTERIM IS TO BE USED. THE BRITISH HAVE PROPOSED A SHUTTLE OF THEIR OWN TO CONSULT IN VARIOUS AFRICAN CAPITALS. WE SHOULD HOLD THEM TO THIS WHILE GIVING CONSIDERATION OF HOW WE CAN COMPLIMENT THEIR EFFORTS.

C. BOTH THE NATIONALISTS AND THE OBSERVERS HAVE RAISED OBJECTIONS TO RECONVENING IN GENEVA. WHILE THEIR OBJECTIONS HAVE NOT BEEN SPECIFIC, WE IMAGINE THAT COST IS AT LEAST ONE FACTOR. WHILE WE SUSPECT THAT SOME - NOT ALL, INCLUDING SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA - WOULD PREFER TO MEET IN AN AFRICAN CAPITAL, THEY CAN PROBABLY BE BROUGHT TO RECOGNIZE THAT NO AFRICAN SITE

WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. SMITH ALSO OBJECTS TO GENEVA
BECAUSE HE BELIEVES IT ENCOURAGES THE NATIONALISTS
TEMPTATION TO GRANDSTAND AND ESCALATE THEIR DEMANDS. IN
THE FINAL ANALYSIS, WE BELIEVE THESE OBJECTIONS ARE OF
LITTLE IMPORTANCE IF AN ACCEPTABLE BASIS FOR CONTINUING
THE NEGOTIATIONS CAN BE FOUND, PARTICULARLY ONE TO
WHICH THE NATIONALISTS AND THE FRONT LINE STATES ARE TO
SOME DEGREE COMMITTED. CATTO UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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